Breaking 12 year silence

Ex-U.S. agent confirms

By Dick Russell

The existence of an "identical twin" for Lee Harvey Oswald — living in Dallas and arrested and released on a federal gun charge shortly before the assassination of John F. Kennedy — has been confirmed by a former agent for the Treasury Department's Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms unit.

With a congressional probe of the JFK assassination in the offing, Frank Ellsworth, now a Regional Public Affairs officer in that agency's Dallas bureau, broke a 12-year official silence to describe "an absolute dead-ringer for Oswald" active at that time with the rightwing Minuteman organization.

"I have a vague recollection that this man was questioned about the assassination, but not by me," Ellsworth told PNS. "Possibly nobody paid much attention because Oswald was in custody. We weren't looking for a fugitive."

While refusing to divulge the individual's name and passing off the incident as probably "sheer coincidence," Ellsworth admitted that the look-alike still resides in Dallas.

He also said that a number of state, federal and local officials had been aware of the man's existence after the assassination. Yet no mention of him appears in the Warren Report or any of the unclassified file material at the National Archives.

Almost from the moment of Oswald's arrest, numerous witnesses claimed to have seen the alleged assassin driving a car, though Oswald didn't drive. They had also seen him in a gun shop, at a rifle range and cashing a check in a grocery store.

But while the person they saw gave his name as "Oswald" and apparently matched the description perfectly, the Warren Commission concluded there was overwhelming evidence that the real Oswald was elsewhere at those times. The witnesses were discounted as "confused" or "mistaken."

For years, the commission's critics have speculated that an Oswald look-alike may have been used by conspirators to impersonate and possibly help frame Oswald — blazing a trail of misleading evidence to implicate him as a lone assassin.

A Dallas deputy sheriff, for example, gave chase to a man who ran from the Texas School Book Depository and climbed into a Rambler station wagon a few minutes after the assassination, later positively identifying him as Oswald. But according to police sources cited in the Warren Report, Oswald was already far away, riding a bus toward his home.

Now Ellsworth confirms that witnesses who believed they saw Oswald target-practicing at a Dallas rifle range — some of the more incriminating sightings — were actually seeing his "twin."

"I do remember two instances where Oswald was supposed to have been at someone's house in North Dallas, and I was able to ascertain after the assassination that it was actually the look-alike," Ellsworth said. "These were times where witnesses thought they saw Oswald in the company of several Minutemen.

"One of these times did involve a group of Minutemen at a rifle range. Several of their names came up in my conversations with him, and I'd noted at the time that he was out shooting with them."

The Oswald look-alike first came to Ellsworth's attention "sometime in the summer of 1963," when the agent began tracking him to try to determine his connection with local arms smugglers. That fall, Ellsworth arrested him on "one of the gun violations," then released him on bond a short time before the fateful Kennedy trip to Dallas.

Immediately after the assassination, when Ellsworth was called to a police interrogation room to question Oswald about the rifle found in his supposed assassin's nest, the agent first believed that it was the same man.

"Oswald was sitting in a chair about 10 feet from the doorway when I entered," Ellsworth remembered. "All I could see was headlines that I'd just turned loose the man who killed the President.

"When Oswald spoke, I realized

Oswald 'twin'

they were two different people. But they had identical build, weight, coloring, facial features and hair. They could have passed for each other."

Ellsworth refused to speculate on whether the man he'd arrested might have known *of* Oswald. He did say the fellow "claimed to have done some arms smuggling in and out of Mexico," where Oswald reportedly traveled in September 1963.

While the real Oswald was apparently a leftist and member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, his "twin" was an equally committed right-winger.

In a Warren Commission interview with Ellsworth dated April 16, 1964, there is no mention of the look-alike. But the interview does credit Ellsworth with several revelations "of value":

- At the time of the assassination of the President, there was almost no information available to the government concerning the activities of Dallas Cubans and other groups in illegal armaments.

- An organization known as the Minutemen is the right-wing group in Dallas most likely to have been associated with any effort to assassinate the President.

- The Minutemen are closely tied to Gen. (Edwin) Walker and H. L. Hunt."

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